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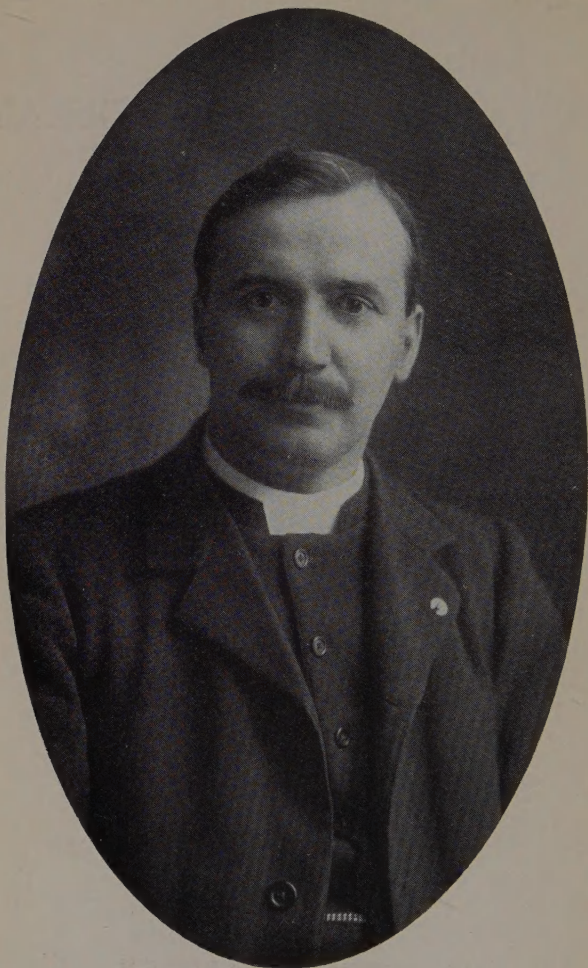
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IN REMEMBRANCE



REV. ALEXANDER MURRAY, M.A.

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In Remembrance

REV. ALEXANDER MURRAY

M.A.

BY

MRS MURRAY

AND OTHERS

WITH PORTRAIT
AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

EDINBURGH
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I

LETTER FROM MRS MURRAY

BALNALON, BIRNAM
PERTHSHIRE, *7th November 1921*

DEAR FRIENDS FROM FAR AND NEAR,

IN response to your requests for some record of my husband's life, I now publish the following brief account of his early years, together with sketches, contributed by friends, of his life and work in the various spheres of his ministry.

Alexander Murray was born in Perth, and as a child he attended with his parents the Knox Free Church, sitting in the pew in front of the late Duncan Mathieson, the well-known Evangelist, who very often treated him to sweets. His mother frequently apologized for her boy's restlessness, and then Duncan would lay his hand on the little black head and say, "God bless the boy with the black eyes."

That blessing counted.

In after years he often remarked, "I

feel his hand upon my head and hear his prayer for blessing."

When he was six years of age the family removed to Crieff. His father, a man widely known and highly respected, acted for many years as guard on the Perth and Crieff railway. Many a time have I seen people approach him with the question, "Are you John Murray's son?" and he would answer in his own quiet yet firm way, "I am, did you know Father?" Happy stories followed of those bygone days, and frequently the parting words were, "He was a fine man, your father."

He was educated at Morrison's Academy, and from there he passed to Taylor's Institution to become a pupil teacher. On the completion of his apprenticeship he entered Moray House, then the Free Church Training College in Edinburgh, as a Queen's Scholar, for a two years' course of study in preparation for work as a certificated teacher. At the same time he attended Edinburgh University as an Arts student.

On leaving the Training College he spent two years as tutor with Col. Stewart Sande-

man's family at Stanley, then resumed his studies at the University, and graduated M.A. in 1889. All those years he worked hard, supporting himself at first by working at various things in his spare hours and holidays, and later by winning bursaries and acting as a private coach. During his University course he held appointments in Daniel Stewart's College and George Watson's College. On various occasions he acted as head-master of rural schools, whilst twice he spent the summer as tutor in Braco Castle. From the age of fifteen years he cost his parents practically nothing.

Each time he went home to Crieff he visited his minister, Dr Henderson—afterwards Principal of the Glasgow College—who always prayed with him and spoke of his soul's welfare. In the winter of 1884–85 he was greatly influenced by Professor Henry Drummond, then addressing a memorable series of meetings for students in the Free Church Assembly Hall. During a week-end visit to his home at this time, and largely as the result of a conversation with Dr Henderson, he made his decision

for Christ, and this step changed his whole after life.

About four years later, in the summer of 1888, he was offered the head-mastership of Port Ellen Public School, and accepted it. On the very day of his appointment a gentleman invited him to travel on the Continent with his sons, but he would not withdraw his acceptance of the Port Ellen appointment, believing that the Lord meant him to go there, having opened that door first, and his stay in Port Ellen had a marked influence in moulding his career.

On the way to take up his duties he had a most interesting experience. Leaving the steamer at Tarbert for a brief space, he, along with several others, took a short walk. Seeing a solitary cottage some distance ahead, he made for it by himself, and asked for a drink of milk. Quickly entering into friendly conversation with the old lady, he said, "Are you not very lonely, living up here all by yourself?" The reply came swiftly and decidedly, "I am not alone, the Lord Jesus is with me." He was much impressed by her faith and the great love

she had for the "Person of Jesus." "Are you a Christian?" she asked. On his replying that he was, she added, "Well, ask for Donald M'Intyre, the fireman on the boat; *he* is a Christian." Returning to the vessel, Mr Murray found the fireman, and by him was introduced to two Faith Pilgrims—splendid women—who were bound for Port Ellen to conduct a mission. He felt drawn towards the evangelists, and threw in his lot with them, taking an active part in the services. It was a most happy time, and very fruitful. One night a message was brought to his rooms: "Come to John M'Gibbon, he is most anxious about his soul." He went in fear and trembling to lead his first soul to Jesus. There, in the shop, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit, he explained the way of salvation to the seeking soul, who, when the truth dawned on him, exclaimed, "I see it! I see it!" Kneeling upon a soap-box, he poured out his thanks to God for deliverance through the Saviour. Many others were brought to Christ, and from that time he became a "fisher of men." He was always

most grateful for those early experiences at Port Ellen. In 1896 we spent a holiday there, and the welcome we received will never be forgotten. Since coming to Birnam I have met a lady who was resident in Port Ellen during the past twenty-three years, and who knew personally all the friends in that district. It was such a comfort and joy to my heart to hear from her of Mr M'Gibbon's "Home-going." With almost his dying breath Mr M'Gibbon spoke from his bedroom window to an open-air audience, giving his last testimony. This she told me at our first meeting, exactly one year after my husband had entered into Glory.

When, in 1889, he entered the New College, Edinburgh, his one aim was to be thoroughly equipped for the work of God in the ministry. He always felt he was separated unto the Gospel of God, and he believed the great burden of humanity is not weakness, but guilt, and that the work of Christ begins with the removal of that guilt through His own sacrifice on the Cross. He believed men never get beyond the need of the old Gospel truths, for men must come

to Christ in the old way, or never come at all.

Over all he ever accomplished he would write, "Not I, but Christ." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory."

Yours in His service

B. B. MURRAY

II

FROM REV. JAMES MUIR, B.D.
GLASGOW

ONE unforgotten summer morning on the Braid Hills my acquaintance began with Alexander Murray, in his student days. It was but a word and a smile, and we went on with our golf. So harmonious was the scene, however, that it remains to this day a finished picture in my memory. Summer sunshine, bracing hill breezes, tense and glad activity suited my new acquaintance as the silver basket suits apples of gold.

The next time we met was at his ordination at Fossoway, and for a few months we were in the same Presbytery. It was my lot to preach on the occasion, and to set him apart for the work of the ministry. And, with his entire consent, he was "separated unto the Gospel of God." That was his life. There is the key to the knowledge of the man. He was lover and friend to all who loved the Gospel. He had, indeed, a ready sympathy for everybody,

and won his way into all hearts. No one ever came to our home whom the children remembered or loved better. He was adopted as "Uncle Murray" by them all. He was easily loved. But his heart was only laid bare to those who loved his message and his work. It was my privilege in after years to take part in his induction to Stornoway and Torry. We were often at each other's Communion, and often together at evangelistic missions. And it was our fellowship in the Gospel that strengthened and cemented our friendship for one another. We were knit together because we were together "separated unto the Gospel of God."

The Son of God had been revealed in him, and out of his own experience he offered salvation to others. He had not only truth to tell, but saving truth. He had no temptation to take politics or literature or social reform for his themes in the pulpit. He coveted no wisdom but the wisdom to win souls. I remember talking with the Captain on the deck of the little steamer that plies among the north isles of Orkney, when

Murray's name was mentioned, for he had held an evangelistic mission in Stromness about that time. "He has a passion for souls," said the Captain. That was the first impression he made on others, and the impression grew deeper with fuller knowledge of him. He was a many-sided man. One could see that he would have succeeded in business, or in teaching, had he chosen these callings. But every gift and capacity were called into exercise for one great end. One master motive guided all. Never to be drawn aside from the purpose of his life, never to lose sight for an instant of the end in the means, always to keep uppermost in his thoughts his call and his office, this is the secret of his fruitfulness and of his greatness.

He was supremely happy in his first congregation. The manse was in his native Perthshire, the church on the opposite bank of the clear winding Devon. Fragrant memories of Disruption worthies clung to the place. His predecessor had finished an honoured ministry at a ripe old age. The young minister's coming was as the breath

of spring. Like Boston at Simprin, he found enough to do even in a small community for whom he must render an account. He brought the Gospel to every fireside. Every alternate Sabbath he walked miles to reach the outer fringes of his parish. He spared not himself. But love made his toil light. An old farmer, one of the elders, used to tell that he remarked to the minister one Monday that he looked a bit spent. "Ah, maybe," came the reply, "but I do love preaching." And all the people, young and old, received his message gladly.

Though I saw no trace of it, I often think he must have gone to Stornoway in fear and trembling. The change from Fossoway was extreme. Lewis is bare, bleak and rugged, cut off from the mainland by the treacherous Minch, and its common speech, Gaelic, was wholly unknown at the Free English manse. The people are warm-hearted, but they have some strange ways. Men of large gifts had ministered to the Free English congregation since its beginning, and they had the advantage of knowing Gaelic. It was

a hazardous undertaking—but Murray did not flinch. His Gospel was not in the least changed. He sought for souls as he had always done. If there was any change, it was in an increased moral earnestness. Ingenious makeshifts in morals were ruthlessly torn to pieces. The sword of the Spirit was more piercing than before. He became pre-eminently a preacher of righteousness, an apostle of fair and honourable dealing, a flame of fire against all hypocrisy and pretence. And men who had no connection with the Churches thanked him for his brave stand for uprightness.

His home life was as his public life. Like the diamond, he flashed the light from every aspect of his life. He was happiest at home. He had obtained from the Lord a true helpmeet. Like others afflicted in hearing, his wife might have led a dull and lonesome life. But the very opposite was the case. There were no secrets—all that the one had the other shared. They were like-minded in everything. The minister's wife was as eager in seeking for souls and winning them to Christ as the minister

himself. What was said of Dürer was true of her also; she was *cos ingeniorum*—the whetstone of his gifts, and, indeed, of other folks' gifts as well. The manse parlour became like the church vestry—a Bethel where young hearts were opened to the open heaven above them. Family worship frequently was a service of thanksgiving for souls born into the Kingdom during the day. Night and day the manse door was open for those who were seeking the way to Zion.

There were limitations inherent in the situation at Fossoway and at Stornoway. But there was abundant scope for every gift and faculty in Torry. No doubt this was the loadstone that drew Murray from his thriving work in Stornoway. Torry had a large population, living apart in many respects from the rest of Aberdeen, and the congregation had long been trained to aggressive evangelism. Here, then, was a field prepared for a prepared worker, and blessing fell upon them from the first. The work grew greater and greater. And the minister developed with the work, till the

fame of Torry had spread throughout the Church. By and by the work grew too great, and Murray frankly confessed it had outgrown his strength. But he would not leave it. He was wedded to it. His delight was in it. His friends knew of call after call reaching him. Glasgow was most importunate, and offered him many wide-open doors, many tempting opportunities. Money was no lure to him, nor fame, nor social position. Honestly he sought to know the will of the Master. And, with his usual good sense, he discerned that will by asking, "What good can I do here that I cannot accomplish in Torry?" And as no work called him that was greater, or fuller of promise or better supported by willing workers, he concluded again and again that the Lord had bidden him abide in this lot till the end of his days.

From the commencement of his ministry Murray rejoiced to do the work of an evangelist. In his later years his help was much sought after in this direction. Every year he gave weeks and fortnights to other places in evangelistic work. His ordinary

preaching was plain and direct, with a view to enlightenment, conviction, decision. And so he was at home in the open-air and evangelistic mission, and, most of all, in the after meeting among anxious inquirers. What a book he could have written of marvellous conversions out of his own experience !

But perhaps his most characteristic gift was that of the teacher. He had been trained for teaching in early life, and its methods and manner never left him. His Bible Class was testimony enough to his success in this line. The saints loved to sit at his feet, to hear him open the Scriptures while their hearts burned within them. His gifts for teaching were recognized by the Principal of the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow, and he was asked for several successive sessions to come south and give a series of lectures on "Soul-Winning," "Personal Dealing," and kindred topics. These lectures were greatly enjoyed, for they were the witness of what he had seen and known for himself.

He was a burning and shining light, and

the shining life was kept up because of the exhausting expenditure of his strength. His life was spent ere it was finished. We are reminded of Brainerd and Henry Martyn and M'Cheyne as we review his brief and bright career. His eye was not dimmed, his raven locks had scarcely begun to turn grey, he was but fifty-three years old, when the end came. And when he passed away from us, it was with the dew of youth still upon him, in the full blaze of the midsummer sun, lifting up his head in hope and faith for the service above.

For more than six months his people prayed for his recovery from his last illness, and all that time he kept sending messages of good cheer. About a month before he departed this life he said to his wife, "I know my work is finished. I'll never preach in Torry again. But the work is the Lord's, and He will see that it is carried on. Write and ask them to give me up to God, and to let Him have His own way." Before this he had made the same request that she herself would give him up to God, adding, "Can you not do it?" With a loud cry,

and in tears, she prayed, "O Lord, what time my heart is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." And immediately a great calm fell upon them both. They talked together after that quite quietly. He thought of everything for her, settling all details, and advising how she was to go on after he departed. One treasured word he left her: "Always count on God's faithfulness; and, remember, I'll never be far from your side." How true and faithful his own heart also was! He often spoke of all he was to meet in the Father's house above, and his face lighted up with joy as he mentioned one and another of his Fossoway friends who had gone home a little while before him. To a friend who asked him how he felt, he replied, "Absolute peace," and to another, who asked if he had any message or blessing to send to Torry, he just said, "God's blessing!" On the day that he went to God he was very tired, and asked his wife, "Oh, do pray earnestly for the Lord to come for me to-day." Anxious to have him as long as possible, she said, "To-morrow, on the

Sabbath, you may rest in glory.” “Oh, no,” he said, “I want to go now.” He had just murmured the words “Joy and peace in believing,” and she prayed as he had requested, and he added, “Amen, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” They were his last words. He entered heaven by prayer, as he had passed through life praying without ceasing. Not long afterwards he turned his head a little aside and looked upwards, and a beautiful smile spread over his face. For it is written, “And they shall see His face; and His name shall be written in their foreheads.”

III

TRIBUTE FROM PROFESSOR STALKER

THE Rev. William Muir, the Home Mission Secretary, who knows as well as any man where the evangelistic forces of the country are to be found, writes me : “ Mr Murray’s loss is one of the greatest we have had for long.” The members of Mr Murray’s Presbytery realized, at the time of his death, that there had been among them a unique personality, possessing a secret which they coveted ; the second service, for example, to him was never a difficulty ; the church was always full. He stuck so closely to his own work that he was comparatively little heard of in public affairs ; and many were surprised to learn that his congregation had gone on growing, till it numbered nearly a thousand, and that, during his ministry, the income had far more than doubled. There had been steady growth all his thirteen years without one backward step.

He would have been the first to confess that, if he had made the Torry congregation,

it also had made him. So strong is the religious emotion in the fishing population that it must find expression, and with some ministers it is liable to get out of hand; but he knew how, while sympathizing and co-operating with such efforts as open-air preaching, to control and guide, and he never failed to command personal respect. All the congregational agencies went on summer and winter without cessation. There was a large prayer-meeting every Saturday night for the men who had been at sea all the week, and this was a splendid preparation for Sunday. The singing of the congregation was a special feature, both for volume and cultivation, and I have never heard it excelled except in Wales. The fisher people are well off, and have been peculiarly prosperous in recent years. Under his direction the congregation agreed to give the collection of the New Year Sunday to the Jewish Mission, and the amount increased from year to year, till this January it exceeded £70.

Mr Murray came to Aberdeen in the fulness of his powers after a ministry in

Stornoway of such marked success that I have heard one of my students declare that, if you met anywhere in the Island of Lewis a man of unusual religious decision or spiritual power, the probability was that you would find him to have been a convert of Mr Murray's. His first charge was in the rural district of Fossoway, in Clackmannanshire, where he introduced all the newer forms of congregational work, such as Christian Endeavour, which he had learned how to manage when an assistant in the model Home Mission congregation of Fountainbridge, under the Rev. George D. Low. No doubt he owed much to the congregation at Crieff, in which he was brought up under the ministry of Dr Henderson, now Principal Henderson of Glasgow.

While, however, many good influences mingled in making him an able minister of Jesus Christ, it was one divine gift which made him what he was: and this was a passion for the souls of men. He believed in conversion, and hungered and thirsted for religious decisions. Without these no

success would have appeared to him of any value. For these he prayed ; towards this single aim all his preaching was directed ; and there is reason to believe that, to a very unusual degree, he was granted the desire of his heart. He was richly rewarded with that peculiar affection which people feel for one who has thus cared for their souls, and, although his ministry may be said to have finished prematurely, he had reason to be satisfied with his portion.

It is only just to add that, in this bent of his soul as well as in every kind of device and effort, he was seconded and sustained by a wise and loving wife, who survives him.

(From the *Record* of the United Free Church,
September 1919.)

IV

ASSISTANTSHIP IN FOUNTAINBRIDGE

BY MR WILLIAM CAIRNS

IT gives me very great pleasure to pen a few recollections of my dear friend "Alex. Murray."

I use the old familiar name by which he was known to us, when he came from his native town of Crieff to Edinburgh to be assistant to the Rev. George D. Low, M.A., of Fountainbridge Free Church, in 1893. He had been trained for the teaching profession, but had heard a call to the ministry, and was licensed as a preacher shortly after he entered upon his duties here. He never donned the clerical garb, however, until he received the call to his first charge at Fossoway. This was possibly a very tactful decision, for while he never would have been refused admission where any minister might call, he found ready entrance, in his ordinary jacket suit, where ministers and missionaries were generally neither wanted nor welcomed.

Fountainbridge in those days was a

slummier place than it is now. Mission work was much more abundant, and called for very tactful service. Mr Murray readily made himself at home with all classes of the people. He seemed ever to have a breeze of the country about him. He was gifted with a sunny nature, and managed somehow always to keep smiling. It would indeed have been a rich contribution to this article had I preserved a record of remarks we heard made about him and his visits, for wherever he went in the Fountainbridge district it can truly be said that he left a trail of sunshine behind him. As a result of his charm, the roughest and wildest of men not infrequently made a confidant of him, and mothers said he was like a son to them.

He was very fond of the bairns—they found in him a real friend—and he carried marvellous comfort to the aged and the sorrowing. Vicious orgies were very frequent on Saturday nights in the mission area, where there were too many public-houses, but the missionary could enter anywhere, often to separate combatants and

restore peace, or help homewards some who otherwise would be claimed by the police. Some folks thought he had a charm about him to escape so often from bodily harm, and in the best sense this was indeed the case.

He very consistently made it a practice to pray in all the houses he visited, and although always joking with a humour that would not hide, he ever managed to introduce a reference to higher things before he took his departure.

It is opportune here to say that he ardently believed in prayer, and I know this characterized his ministry in every charge he held. In those early days he often conversed of the power of prayer, and I think he owed his faith in it to his mother, whom we knew to be a God-fearing woman of outstanding Christian character. He not only believed in prayer, but practised it, and many a Sunday evening before his mission meeting we have knelt together in his rooms, and supplicated the divine blessing on the word to be spoken and sung. In this I feel confident he laid

the sure foundation of his future successful ministries.

He and I were very friendly, and while he had "apartments" elsewhere, our fireside was his Edinburgh home. Scarcely a week-day passed, and seldom a Sabbath evening, but he was there. He had the freedom of the home, and many were the social hours we mutually enjoyed after a day's hard toil, when Alex. Murray would be the centre of a merry company, full of tricks and innocent mischief. Some personalities throw a restraint over a homely group; Mr Murray broke up the clouds, and turned every suitable opportunity into laughter and sunshine.

He enjoyed good health, was a keen sportsman, and specially excelled at golf. His sunny nature and his keen delight in juvenile sport made him a favourite with old and young. At church meetings or picnics he was always the centre of attraction.

He had spent some time tutoring gentlemen's sons in the country, and, as a result of this experience and his own Crieff boy-

hood's days, he had obtained a wonderful knowledge of the habits of birds and beasts of the field, and was rich in information regarding botany. These things all combined to make his conversation most attractive, and played no small part in accounting for his winsomeness with young people.

He had a good "Bishop" in the Rev. Mr Low, whose kindly and fatherly advice guided him in studying the most helpful books and best methods in the exercise of his mission work. He occupied the pulpit occasionally, although in those days students and probationers had not the same freedom in that respect as they now enjoy.

He was most careful and painstaking in preparing for his mission meetings. Many a time he read over his notes with me, and asked if his message was plain enough. He was most methodical and teacher-like in all his ways—hymns, scripture reading, and even his points in prayer, being carefully arranged beforehand. He seemed to think that in this high service to which he had devoted himself the best he could give must

always be given. One could always trace the teacher also in the way he built up his addresses and sermons. Invariably careful and clear as regards their construction, the outstanding feature of all his addresses was their strong evangelical appeal. I often thought him very original in his interpretation of the truths of the "old book," but whatever his theme he always made it an occasion to lift up the Saviour, who is still able to draw all men unto Him.

He was very helpful to young men and women in the district and congregation, and gathered to his side a large band of workers, who accompanied him to street corners and back courts, where, around a small organ, the "old, old story" was sung and preached. His work was materially helped by a large choir of which I happened to be conductor, and the memories of those days are still very fragrant to all who were privileged to share in that wonderful work. It was no unusual thing for anxious inquirers to remain behind after the Sunday evening meetings, and not a few of to-day's loyal church workers, now in different parts of the world,

date the time of their decision from the days when they were in touch with Alex. Murray.

If I were asked what was the outstanding feature of his work in Fountainbridge, I would say the influence of his personality. Mr Murray, as I have already indicated, was most attractive in his manner, and the results of his two years' successful labours in this difficult district were a tribute to the power of a consecrated personality. Everybody liked him—possibly because he liked everybody—and some of us still, without difficulty, can clearly recall his strong eyes, his natural and ready smile, and his firm handshake. I often thought he was sunniest with the poorest, and he was seen at his best when interesting himself in the affairs of some heart-broken mother, or “cracking” by the fireside of some lonely old woman. It can truly be said of him that he was one of the “Children of the Light.”

Though the “Light of the World,” Jesus did not come, as men would say, to light the streets; but we know that everywhere

He went was the brighter for His coming, and in this respect Alex. Murray was a faithful disciple, for many a dark stair and poor dwelling was lit up and left the brighter for his visit and his comradeship. Earnestness also characterized his labours, and he went about looking for opportunities to speak and smile for his Master. It is not ours to say how far he impressed his message on the hearts of the people God gave him to work amongst, but it can safely be said, giving the glory first to God who led this bright young soul into their midst, that there are many who, at the recollection of his name, are ready to rise up and call him blessed.

When he launched out as a full-fledged minister it was with deep and apparent regret that the people, both of the mission district and the congregation, parted with him, and they made the time of his going a suitable occasion for presenting him with a gold watch and chain, gifts testifying to the golden opinions all held of this young and promising servant of the Lord.

Before Mr Murray set out for his new

sphere, the late Principal Whyte, of St George's United Free Church, presented him with a copy of his *Bunyan Characters*, inscribed as follows :

To Rev. Alexander Murray, M.A., in grateful remembrance of his work in Fountainbridge, and with best wishes for his future as a preacher and a pastor.

ALEXANDER WHYTE.

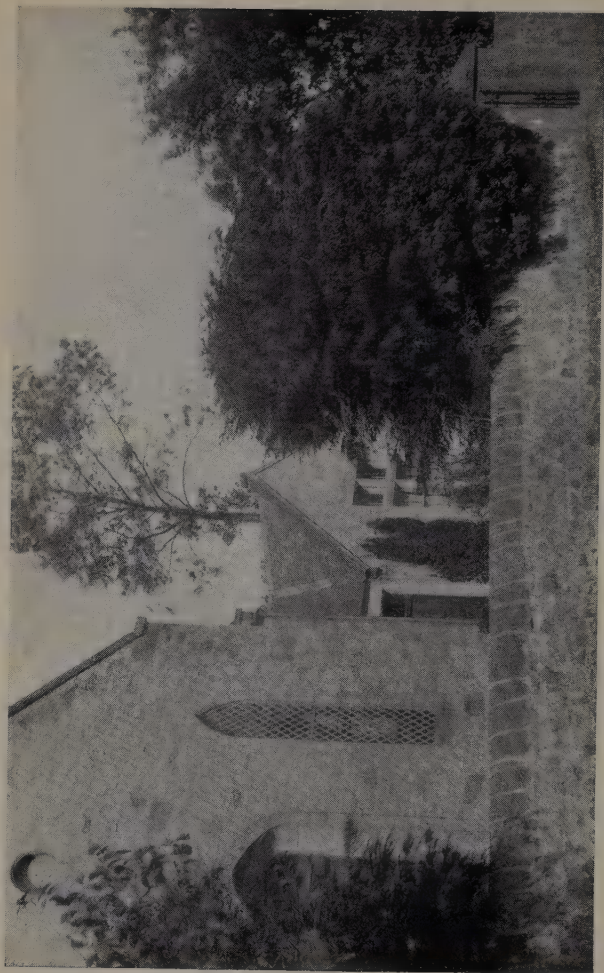
Oct. '95.

I have tried to sketch briefly an outline of the early years of our departed friend, who was not given to speaking of himself in his lifetime. It is my sincere prayer that this simple record of affection and regard may be blessed by God to the leading of others to enter upon that bright path in which he walked, and which is as the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

V

THE FOSSOWAY MINISTRY

BY MR D. LEIGHTON, PIPLODA, RAJPUTANA



UNITED FREE CHURCH, FOSSOWAY

MORE than twenty years have passed since I lived in Fossoway, and there have been many happenings in my life since then. Some events of that period have receded in my memory, and some I have forgotten altogether. But into everybody's life come incidents and persons leaving impressions which neither time nor space can obliterate.

In my life such an incident was my conversion, and such a person was Mr Murray of Fossoway. It was in Fossoway U.F. Manse, and in Mr Murray's presence, I surrendered myself to the Master. There are many others, I believe, who, like myself and for similar reasons, will to their dying day remember Mr Murray and the Fossoway Manse with the deepest affection.

I had at times thought of religion, but not as a thing specially applicable to my own needs. I had thought religion a good thing, helpful to some people in living and still

more when dying, but it had no real interest for me. I had the usual stock of criticisms, some quite honest and others for the purpose of argument only. I was not at all attracted by the claims of what I considered a namby-pamby Christianity, and was prepared even to resist them, but Mr Murray showed me my position, and what Christ could do for me. With a few simple Bible truths and by no subtle logic I was led, in a manner which, to the old man within me, seemed tame, to "lippen" to Him.

When Mr Murray came to Fossoway the place was, from the point of view of religion, a veritable "Sleepy Hollow," but his coming wakened up the dormant life. I had heard of the man long before I knew him, and had been jocularly warned to beware, in case he should convert me. To be converted was a pitiable experience—akin to "going off one's head."

Mr Murray's influence appeared first among the young folks, who responded readily to their bright and earnest young minister. His companionableness made him attractive to young people, and brought

him opportunities of earnest talk which otherwise he would not have got. To most of them the Gospel came with a new meaning, and many came out decidedly for Christ. The Christian Endeavour meetings were the rallying-place, and very stimulating these meetings were. A warm Christian spirit with no forbidding formality dominated them, making them a real blessing. There these young Christians had an opportunity not only of learning about Jesus, and building up their faith, but of giving expression to the new thoughts and aspirations that God's Spirit had given birth to in their minds and hearts. In school, at work, and in their homes they put into practice the teaching of Jesus, and there is no doubt they became a real Christian force in the community.

After many years have passed, one of Mr Murray's Fossoway Endeavourers writes: "He (Mr Murray) came to Fossoway when he was much needed. His enthusiastic and sympathetic personality drew a band of between thirty and forty young men and women round him which was for their

good and for the glory of God. I may not have attained to the high ideal he pointed out to me, and which at one time I thought I could walk up to, but this I know, that at bottom there is the good and lasting influence that will go with me across the 'river.' - I was away for about five years of the most useful and the most interesting part of Mr Murray's ministry in the district ; however, I was not so long away that I forgot the powerful and gripping enthusiasm of the man. I can always remember the look in his face, and the catching vibrations of his voice, as he spoke the message of God. I have not forgotten that it was good for me that I met him at Fossoway."

This Christian Endeavour Society commenced in a gardener's bothy. One Sabbath, at the close of the evening service (there was only a midday service when Mr Murray came), a young man said, as the minister shook hands with him in passing out, "I would like to join the Church." "Well, you know what that means," was Mr Murray's reply, to which the young man at once rejoined, "I found Salvation to-day in the

Bible Class." Oh, the joy that filled Mr Murray's heart! He had seen many conversions in Fountainbridge under the Rev. George Low, and his soul longed and prayed for the same blessings in Fossoway.

The young man at once confessed Christ before his fellow gardener, and when Mr Murray visited them next day, he too yielded to the Saviour's call. Soon another young gardener was converted, and the Christian Endeavour began with those three members and the minister. One after another in the district decided for Jesus, and came out in His service. The Endeavour meetings were then held in the session-house, but this soon proved too small, and at an early date a suitable hall was erected. At the same time the church edifice was renovated and redecorated. A system of heating by hot water was added and the lighting improved, while an organ was installed to assist in the service of praise.

Not the young people alone were affected; older people were drawn in. Some, old in years, were rejuvenated in spirit. One

woman used to say that, even after a hard day's work, she "danced with delight when meeting night came round."

The preaching at the ordinary services had laid siege to the hearts of old and young alike, and in not a few cases the desire for a real intimate knowledge of God and His salvation was created. It could hardly have been otherwise; only the hopelessly hardened could have remained unaffected. Delivered with intense feeling, the Gospel in its simplicity was always Mr Murray's theme. His voice, his eyes, his few significant gestures bespoke the burning earnestness of the soul within. He preached not to please, nor for approbation, but for souls—not now and again, but always. He preached for souls and got them. Not less effective than his preaching were the quiet talks he had with individuals. He had a way of getting into one's confidence and clearing away difficulties. Careless ones and those who were slipping, perhaps unconsciously, into intemperance got a lift from him, or, better still, were brought into God's marvellous light. He had infinite

confidence in the Gospel's power to help the weak.

With his band of Endeavourers he held meetings on Sabbath afternoons in the villages around. In Powmill lived a number of old folks who could not attend church because of bodily frailties, and also young folks whose only hindrance was their want of desire. These meetings proved a blessing to many. One old woman who lived alone, and in whose house services were often held, declared that "Jesus had become so real to her that she jist cracked a' day wi' Him." As she went about her few household duties, she sometimes looked up expecting to see Him at her "shouter." Dear old soul! she knows Him better now. He appeared to her one day and took her. One most interesting case of conversion there was that of a great drunkard, whom Mr Murray continually visited and finally induced to come to these meetings. During a season of special services, conducted by an honoured servant of God, Mr James Smith of the Perthshire Christian Union, this man came right out for God, and after he had learned

to read, the Bible became his constant companion. Years after, when Mr Murray had settled in Aberdeen, this trophy of grace twice spent a holiday with his former minister, his witness helping another, such as he had been, to make the great decision.

Mr Murray had a way of unearthing people from the odd corners of the parish. The laird and his gardener, the farmer and his ploughman, the dyker and the ditcher were to him alike, men with souls to save, and he made conscientious efforts to get into touch with them. His manner, like his religion, was, without being boisterous, of the cheerful sort, and gained him easy approach even to those who would otherwise have resented being spoken to about their souls.

An old man, a dyker who was working temporarily in the district, was a great stimulus to our Christian Endeavour meetings. I remember him mostly for his great freedom and fluency of speech. He prayed in the Doric with the simple directness and naturalness he used in ordinary conversation, just as he might have done in speaking

to a friend, but with great reverence and earnestness. Though most of us spoke the Doric every day, a prayer in that medium sounded unusual in our ears. But it was none the less sweet, and reminiscent of those bygone days when even the minister preached and prayed in the Scottish tongue.

One night a ploughman found his way to the Christian Endeavour meeting in The Crook. He was a stranger, but at the close of the meeting two young gardeners got into conversation with him and volunteered to see him on his way a bit. Very soon their object was apparent. As the three jogged over the Knockantinny Hill, they with quiet persistence endeavoured to persuade the ploughman to come regularly to the Christian Endeavour, and with no less earnestness did they seek to show him what Jesus could do for him. Their quiet earnestness impressed the man and their companionship pleased him. Although he in no way committed himself, that evening's walk and talk led to the incident which altered the course of his life. Not only did he go back to the Endeavour, but he was

converted, and ultimately went to India as a missionary.

Mr Murray was an optimist, and he had a great love for innocent fun. These are important qualifications, and very necessary for those who have to deal with men, especially in winning them for Christ. At a little meeting held in a kitchen on the slopes of the Ochil Hills above Carnbo, the singing was led by a man who thought he knew more about singing than he did. He frequently started the tunes too high or too low, and Mr Murray had repeatedly to come to his help by giving the key. After that he would go at it with great vigour. However, at the close he owned up to having "gane aff a bit." Some ministers would have been annoyed, but Mr Murray looked at the comical side of it and told the man to do better next time.

It cannot be wondered at that Church services, Christian Endeavour meetings, Saturday night meetings for prayer, Band of Hope and Scripture Union meetings (the last held in the Manse dining-room) were all looked forward to with great delight,

and that people, old and young, walked long distances, even on the darkest winter evenings, in order to be present.

Mr Murray was singularly blessed with a helpful life-mate, who contributed unobtrusively, but in no small degree, to the success of his work. I can still picture them in the Manse at Fossoway, or spinning along on their cycles to visit some distant member of the church. They were always together and always happy. My last recollection of Mr Murray is seeing him sitting on the lawn at Torry Manse nine years ago. There he sat with former Fossoway friends, talking about old times, with many a joke intermingled. I think I see those deep black eyes—how one moment they would dance with fun, the next they would be so calm and serious. One felt that, no matter which mood he was in, humorous or serious, he had constantly in view the one great matter which dominated his life, namely, winning souls for God, or as a member put it, “He was aye efter the main thing.”

Fossoway was a fortunate congregation in having a man like Mr Murray for its

minister, and specially fortunate were those members who were privileged to sit under him throughout the complete term of his ministry. I wish I could have been one of them.

VI

THE STORNOWAY MINISTRY

BY REV. A. J. MORRISON, M.A., THURSO



UNITED FREE ENGLISH CHURCH, STORNOWAY

IN the summer of 1902 Mr Murray came to Stornoway for ten days to assist in special evangelistic work among the fishermen during the season. The United Free English congregation happened to be without a minister at the time, and on hearing the deputy from Fossoway, speedily decided that he was a man ideally fitted for the pastorate. Accordingly Mr Murray was elected minister, and in due course a call was largely signed and presented before the Presbytery of Dunfermline and Kinross by five Commissioners.

Mr Murray, on accepting the call, was formally loosed from his charge at Fossoway, and on 20th August 1902 he was inducted to the English Church, Stornoway.

The congregation over which he was now settled was one with an interesting history. It was formed in 1875 as an offshoot from the old Free Church of Stornoway, to meet a prevalent desire to have a purely English

charge. The parent congregation remained bilingual as before, and continues to this day, under the name of the United Free High Church, to hold services in equal numbers in Gaelic and English.

In 1876 the Rev. Donald J. Martin was ordained as first minister of the new charge, and two years later a handsome church was opened, the preacher on the occasion being the late Professor W. Gordon Blaikie, Edinburgh. A manse and halls were also built in course of time, which, along with the church, are an ornament to the town and a credit to the congregation. Mr Martin's ministry was a memorable one. It was distinguished by a warm and aggressive evangelism, and several times during its course, notably in 1880 and 1896, it was blessed with seasons of revival.

Christian work of various kinds flourished under Mr Martin's care, while the Temperance cause received an impetus which can yet be felt in the community. In 1897, to the deep regret of his people, Mr Martin was translated to Oban, and later in the same year the Rev. John S. Macdonald,

M.A., was ordained to the Stornoway pastorate. An eloquent and scholarly preacher, he greatly endeared himself to the congregation, and general sorrow was felt when, after a brief ministry of four years, he left for Nairn. He is now the minister of Sefton Park Presbyterian Church, Liverpool, and his preaching gifts are widely known throughout the Church at large.

Upon this heritage Mr Murray entered auspiciously and hopefully. He was cordially received by the Highland folk, with whom, as an avowed Celt, he had much in common.

From the first he sounded the evangelistic note fully and clearly. It was evident to all that he had come to Stornoway for the supreme purpose of winning souls. His preaching had about it an urgency and winsomeness which could not fail to arrest and move his hearers. He was possessed of a melodious voice, a telling delivery, a simple, chaste English style, and a wonderful faculty for lucid illustration, all of which contributed markedly to his success as a preacher. If Mr Murray's message was

fitted to awaken the careless, it was also rich in helpfulness for Christian people. His expositions of the books of Scripture at the Sabbath services, and his courses of study at the weekly prayer meeting, were appreciated by all who sought guidance and instruction in the spiritual life. On questions of critical interpretation he held to the more conservative school of thought. Yet among his greatest admirers in Stornoway were those of other views, who never failed to acknowledge their indebtedness for the stimulus they had received from his presentation of the truth.

In Mr Murray's preaching there was also a pronounced ethical note. The oft-repeated taunt, that evangelism is a thing divorced from practical morality, found in him a complete refutation. A salvation achieved by human merit he could never preach; but a salvation producing purity and uprightness of character he preached incessantly. Faith which did not issue in obedience had no meaning for him.

"What I like about Murray," remarked one of his Stornoway office-bearers, "is that

he tells you exactly what to do." It was a simple and unaffected testimony to the clearness and definiteness of his moral teaching.

Mr Murray was a great believer in personal dealing, and in Stornoway, as elsewhere, this was a salient feature of his work. He followed up his fervent pulpit appeals with frank private talks about vital matters. At the after-meetings, following his Sabbath evening services and open-air meetings, he had an opportunity of dealing with inquirers and helping them in their difficulties. As he scanned the faces of his congregation from the pulpit he once saw a young woman who seemed to be under concern. On interviewing her afterwards, in private, he found that she was indeed a seeker after God, and he had the joy of leading her into the light. Hers was no isolated case. Very interesting was the case of the burgh civil engineer, who had been divinely laid on his minister's soul. Late one night they met on the street, and it seemed as if each had been looking for the other; they had a memorable walk together, with a heart-to-heart con-

versation, and ere the inquirer reached his own door he had made the great decision. He became an earnest Christian worker, and till the end of his life remained one of Mr Murray's closest friends. About the same time the civil engineer's companion, an accomplished young man and a leader in musical circles, came out boldly on the Christian side, and dedicated his rich gift of song to the service of the Master. And so the sacred fire kindled by God's ambassador spread from soul to soul.

Mr Murray found a specially fruitful field for personal work among the students who came from outlying parts to prosecute their studies at the Nicolson Institute. He speedily got into touch with them, and by his consecration and grace of character won in a unique degree their confidence and affection. Like Henry Drummond, to whom he so often acknowledged a spiritual debt, he possessed a rare personal magnetism which worked wonders among those young men and women. His manse, too, was like a home to them, and all their interests lay near to his heart. Not a few of them

were led by him to Christ, and others, who had previously come to a decision, were initiated into various branches of Christian service. To-day they work for Church and State in different parts of the world, and they thank God for Alexander Murray, whose friendship has been a great formative influence in their lives. In Stornoway, then, there were given to this faithful servant many precious seals of his ministry. He watched for souls as one who should give his account with joy, and he had a rich reward.

Mr Murray laid great emphasis on the public profession of the faith. He believed that a man's religious security depended on his burning his boats behind him and facing the future manfully in reliance upon God. For this reason he had a special preference for that admirable institution for young people, the Christian Endeavour Society. He liked the definite terms of its covenant and its opportunity for witness-bearing. In his church in Stornoway he found a large branch already at work, which had been established during Mr Martin's

ministry. By his personal encouragement he still further increased its influence, and made it more than ever a focus for the Christian activities of the congregation. In addition he founded a Junior Branch for boys and girls, whom he thus taught the necessity, not only for decision, but also for testimony and service. It was truly heartening to see the buoyant enthusiasm which the young disciples brought to the work. In other ways Mr Murray found outlets for the energies of the eager converts. He organized and personally conducted a large and flourishing open-air meeting on Sabbath evenings after his Church services were over. The town square was chosen as a prominent vantage-ground; the singing was bright and hearty, and the addresses brief but pointed; and so the Gospel reached the ears of many passers-by who were not often found in the churches. He also had an open-air meeting on Saturday evenings.

The congregational Sabbath Schools attained during this ministry a high level of efficiency, and here also spiritual fruit

was seen. The prayer spirit was manifest in all Mr Murray's work, and meetings for devotion and intercession formed a marked feature of his Stornoway pastorate. Like all successful evangelists, he delighted to join with other kindred spirits in passionate entreaty with God for human souls. He took special advantage of the fishing season each year for intrusive Christian effort. He found amongst the fishers a congenial atmosphere. Their spontaneity, heartiness, and openness for aggressive methods strongly appealed to him, and he not only welcomed them at the church, but entertained them hospitably, often in large numbers, at his manse. In the spring of 1903 a storm prevented the fishermen getting out of harbour, so meetings for prayer were initiated, and these continued every evening for five weeks. During that time only one address was given. The Spirit of God filled the place; old and young were converted, and joined in praise and prayer.

In all his work Mr Murray was wholeheartedly supported by his devoted and like-minded wife. She was untiring in her

activity among old and young, and all who were associated with her husband in his Stornoway ministry have grateful recollections of her sympathy and helpfulness in every good cause. Although he did not take much part in public work, Mr Murray was unflinching in his advocacy of social righteousness. He faithfully preached to his Stornoway people the necessity of maintaining a high standard of commercial morality. As a Temperance advocate he was uncompromising. The theory, often advanced by those who professed neutrality, that the liquor question is purely a political one, received short shrift at his hands. It was his conviction that strong drink is a truculent and relentless foe of God's Kingdom, and that it is an obvious Christian duty to forswear it altogether, both in personal use and in business relationships. The writer vividly remembers his trenchant and powerful Temperance sermon at the close of 1902 on the text, "Thou shalt not kill." In that sermon he urged that, if the provisions of the Mosaic Law were strictly enforced in modern times, the sellers of strong

drink would be held responsible at the bar of justice for the crimes committed by intoxicated persons. Mr Murray never took a prominent share in the work of Church courts, yet no Churchman was more loyal than he. He was ever ready to help his brethren, and he greatly regretted that, not being a Gaelic speaker, he was unable to serve the large landward areas of Lewis, where the ancient language holds sway. It was during his Stornoway ministry that the famous Church crisis took place, as a result of the disastrous decision of the House of Lords in 1904. One of the kindest of men, he yet had no hesitation in publicly describing the judgment as an iniquitous one. His own congregation had entered the Union with practical unanimity, and consequently remained unaffected by the crisis, but his counsel and sympathy were highly valued by those who bore the stress of that trying time. It was a great joy to him that the neighbouring congregation (the Stornoway High Church), which had been evicted from its buildings, received hospitality in his handsome and commodious hall

till it was again in possession of a place of worship of its own. Mr Murray welcomed the co-operation of brethren from all churches in his evangelistic work. One of his chief associates in Stornoway was the Rev. John S. MacCallum, of the Parish Church, who died in Greenock a few years ago.

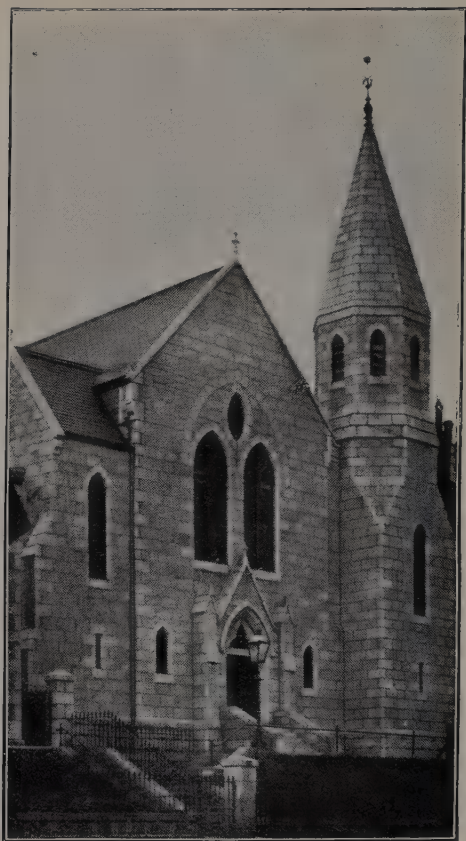
It was but natural that the fame of such a ministry as this should spread far and wide. One can imagine how the East Coast fishermen, who had received blessing from the Stornoway services, would speak on their return home of the things which they had seen and heard. Envious glances were cast at the English congregation in Stornoway, and more than once there were rumours of "calls." These at length materialized in the summer of 1906, when, towards the end of his fourth year in Stornoway, the Torry Church, Aberdeen, addressed to Mr Murray a unanimous invitation to become their minister. The Rev. A. D. Donaldson, of St Clement's Church, came to prosecute the call before the Lewis Presbytery. When the Stornoway Commissioners appeared at the Presbytery of Dunfermline and Kinross

in a similar capacity in 1902, perhaps the most impressive statement from the Fosso-way side was made by Mr Younger, who told, in a voice tremulous with emotion, how he had been brought to God as a fruit of Mr Murray's ministry. The experience was reproduced in connection with the 1906 call, when Mr Alex. Macdonald, the civil engineer already referred to, came forward as a representative of the English Church and testified that he had been won by his beloved minister for God and for good. It was a signal evidence of the blessing which follows the faithful preacher wherever he goes. But Mr Murray felt that he was divinely called to a wider field of aggressive evangelistic work; accordingly he accepted the invitation from Torry, to the great regret of his beloved people in Stornoway.

So ended a ministry which, though brief, was surpassed by none in the English congregation for deep appeal and for spiritual fruitfulness.

VII

THE TORRY MINISTRY
BY MR WILLIAM S. CAIE
CONGREGATIONAL TREASURER



TORRY UNITED FREE CHURCH, ABERDEEN

THE death of our beloved minister on 21st June 1919 evoked great sorrow, not only in the congregation and district, but throughout many parts of the country.

His upright life, so quietly lived, was an inspiration to all who came in contact with him. He loved his work, and lived up to what he preached, his one aim being the winning of souls for the Master he loved so well. He was always on the outlook for anxious souls, and his joy at decisions for Jesus was great.

Mr Murray was a man who did not court favour or applause, and often, when one was on the point of rising to say how we had appreciated something he had done or said, he changed the subject.

On the first Sabbath after his coming to Torry he stated at the outset from the pulpit that his great aim and object was the winning of souls, and that the Manse was open day and night, if necessary, for

those he could help in that matter, or in any matter of importance. At the same time he made it perfectly clear that trivial gossip would not be countenanced by him. This made a deep impression. Great numbers took the opportunity of unburdening themselves in the Manse, where they always found loving sympathy. The first to go was a little girl of eight years. She went with the Bible in her hand, and when kindly asked what she wished, she said, "To give myself to Jesus." She has proved a faithful follower ever since, and a devoted worker for Christ and the Church.

In the pulpit he wore no gown, and probably got nearer the hearts of the people in this way. He was a living fire; his sermons were of the best, always fresh, and delivered with great earnestness and power. During the thirteen years of his ministry here no one can remember him giving an old address. As he unfolded his subject in his own inimitable way, his eyes flashed to and fro throughout the whole building, and he could see at a glance when anyone was in distress of soul by conviction of sin.

In intimating the short after-meeting for prayer, at the close of the evening service, he always invited anxious ones to remain. He was a rare expository preacher, presenting the truth of God's Word with a fine lucidity and attractiveness. This created a thirst for the Word, so he always had great congregations, and many remained for the after-meeting. During the prayers of three or four of the elders, he moved quietly amongst the people, and usually was successful in getting beside the anxious ones, whom he asked to remain when the others left, or to meet him afterwards in the vestry.

After the benediction he intimated the open-air meeting, then, before anyone got out, was at the door, shaking hands, and saying a word here and there; all counted it a great privilege to get a handshake, and contentedly waited in queues for this purpose. This done, from the top of the stairs he saw the procession formed and started—the band leading—for the open-air meeting, then he returned to the church to deal with the anxious. Afterwards he

made his way to the "open-air," and took charge, the leader gladly giving way, and how lovingly and earnestly he used to appeal to the eager crowds who gathered Sabbath after Sabbath. At the close of the meeting the procession was re-formed, and the minister having given the word of command, the band of thirteen brass instruments sounded out the Gospel tunes far and near, as we marched back to the church hall for another after-meeting. There he quietly appealed to the unconverted to "come to Jesus." He used to say it was like "hauling in the net." At this meeting, and also after the evening service, he dealt with very many anxious souls, old and young. The self-righteous, the drunkard, the careless and indifferent, "broken earthenware," sinners of every kind were reached and "saved to serve." This went right on summer and winter during all the years of his memorable ministry. He proved that the "old, old story" has still power over men's hearts and wills. His enthusiasm inspired others, and all the meetings were crowded, but without excitement, or shout-

ing, or anything unseemly—marked only by earnest and loving messages, spoken and sung. Everything was fully arranged; in the *Monthly Cover* a list appeared of all who were to take part, so that they might prayerfully study God's Word. Everyone was loyal and ready, whether needed or not.

The thoroughness of the man impressed one at every point; no halting or flurry, but a calm, reverent earnestness of purpose marked his every action. How well we noted this on Sabbaths. Never was he found hurrying to the services, though often first at church. Coming from his vestry, he passed from pew to pew, welcoming the older people who came early, but left again with one of the elders or the church officer in time to ask God's blessing on the service before ascending the pulpit. In connection with his open-air work Mr Murray was left a legacy which came to him as a great surprise. A Torry shoemaker, a member of another church, bequeathed £30 to the minister of the United Free Church, Torry, whereof, according to the terms of the gift, "£20 shall be applied by him for Mission

purposes, and £10 distributed by him, in his sole discretion, in the purchase of coal for the deserving poor of the congregation." Old Mr Leiper thought much of the open-air work, so Mr Murray devoted the £20 to the fund for the upkeep of the band.

He also had a Saturday night open-air meeting, at which he was always present, distributing booklets to the passers-by and conversing with them. It was a sight to see sinners gather round him, and every heart glowed when he was seen, sometimes with head bared, praying in the street with some sinning or seeking soul.

Not only at the church services were decisions made, but in connection with every agency—they were all spiritual—souls were converted. Many yielded to God at their own firesides as he made his pastoral visits. Very few Sabbaths ever went past without conversions, for Mr Murray believed in his God, looked for decisions every week, and was rarely disappointed. Hundreds were saved during those years we were privileged to have him as our minister. If one week passed fruitless he was not long in having

the workers on their knees, pleading that souls might be won for God's glory. Our vestry could tell of many effectual, fervent prayers. It was truly written of him in the *Link*, "He is one of the greatest soul-winners in the Scottish Church."

So great was his love for aggressive work, for which he knew there was ample scope in the Torry district, that he left Stornoway for a salary £100 less per annum than he received there. In a very short time the effect was plainly seen both in attendance and finance. Not only did he reach the hearts of members, but he got down to their substance. He was a generous giver himself, and, by precept and example, made giving an easy matter. The result was marvellous. We were not even self-supporting when he came, but in a very short time this state of matters was altered, and in addition we were able to give him a supplement. When his ministry commenced there was a debt of £100 on the church building, and we had arranged for a sale of work to raise this sum, but he so soon taught us the "Grace of Giving," that not only was the debt speedily

cleared off, but £50 more than was required was received in the church plate. Thus we learned that giving directly is infinitely easier than the roundabout method of sales of work or bazaars, and is more glorifying to God.

So greatly did the attendance increase that it was decided to provide additional sittings by adding side galleries to the church. Sufficient money to complete the scheme was quickly collected, and plans were prepared. Unfortunately war broke out; the scheme was deferred and the money, £650, invested in War Loan.

After the Armistice it was agreed to go on with the work. The cost was now exactly four times the pre-war figure, but an energetic committee soon raised the extra amount of £1850. All the money was given entirely by subscription. The alterations, commenced in March 1921, include the erection of the two side galleries, giving seating accommodation for nearly five hundred additional people. Four new windows have been put in, giving additional lighting facilities, and electric light has also been installed

throughout. The church was reopened for public worship on Sabbath, 25th September 1921, when Rev. James Black, M.A., Edinburgh, preached at both services.

At all business meetings the greatest harmony prevailed. He knew how to guide and control. Although as alert and keen a business man as one could wish, he was always happy in making dry business pleasurable.

A proof of his great influence on the hearts of the congregation was the remarkable response to his appeals on behalf of the Jews, born of his great love for Israel's ancient race. He was one of the best friends of the Jewish Mission of the United Free Church, and under his inspiration the collection from our congregation has been for some years the highest over the whole Church. This, no doubt, is due to the marvellous way he had of imparting and diffusing knowledge. Before he came the amount given was about £2 per annum. This sum was increased in the first year, and steadily grew until the collection, always taken on the first Sabbath of the year—

“To the Jew first”—reached in 1919, £78; 1920, £80, 8s.; 1921, £75, 10s.

At the very best services, from the point of view of numbers, he arranged that the collections should be given to others, instead of being devoted to our own funds, viz. :

First Sabbath of the Year—The Jews.

April Communion—Collection for the poor of the congregation.

July Communion—Collection for Royal Infirmary.

October Communion—Collection for the Poor.

One standing order with him was that every penny received at a collection was given for the special purpose it was intended to serve. This shows in a most remarkable manner the utter unselfishness of the man. Often he found his way round to the vestibule where the offerings were counted, and nothing pleased him better than to know there was an increase: nor was this all; he used to ask one of the office-bearers to return thanks to God for touching the hearts of the people to give so liberally.

Contributions for Foreign Missions in con-

nection with our United Free Church were also largely increased, and to the missionaries of many smaller denominations he willingly gave his pulpit, besides urging his people to give what help they could. Many have been the touching letters received from missionaries who were thus benefited.

Four of our young men—one a doctor—and three of our young women have through his inspiring zeal for the foreign field given themselves to this work. We hope others will follow. On Mr Murray's funeral day another young man told Mrs Murray he was preparing to study for the ministry. That was a great joy.

His interest in the young was great. There are three Sabbath schools with 800 children on the roll, 190 of whom received book prizes for perfect attendance at forenoon and evening church services during the last year of his ministry. He periodically visited the schools, and invariably spoke words of cheer to scholars and teachers alike, telling the young people to make early choice of following Jesus, and exhorting the teachers to instil with diligence

into the young minds the truths of the Bible.

Christian Endeavour Societies have proved a great blessing and success. In fact, all agencies prospered "according to the good hand of our God upon us," or, as one of our elders said, "The Lord blessed the house for Joseph's sake." The membership of the church was more than doubled, and exceeded nine hundred, while the income was trebled. He received many "calls," but declined them, even although the salary offered was in some cases nearly double what he was receiving, so clearly did he see that his work still lay in Torry. In fact, it frequently happened that several interesting conversions took place on the evenings when deputations were present. On one such occasion eight persons yielded to the claims of the Saviour, and the visitors, seeing such a great work being carried on, felt it would be unfair to press Mr Murray to leave Torry, although they would fain have had similar work in their own congregation.

Our minister was greatly helped and encouraged by Mrs Murray. She, too, was

a most enthusiastic worker, devoting a great part of her time to the church work, aggressive and missionary, both for home and abroad.

Although a great leader and organizer, giving to every man his appointed duty, he yet kept his hand on every agency, and every branch of the work was regularly visited by him. He was as sharp as a needle in noting all details, and could with his clear, steady eye look one through and through. He did not spare himself. During the part of the year when his Bible Class was in session he had to prepare subjects for five services each week, viz., Sabbath Forenoon Service; Bible Class in afternoon; Sabbath Evening Service; Wednesday Prayer Meeting; and Saturday Fellowship Meeting, with an average attendance of seventy to eighty. The Wednesday Service commenced with an attendance of fourteen, but steadily increased till the average became from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty. This was maintained during the war, when three hundred of our members were absent on war service. Many

a time the hall was crowded out at a special meeting on Wednesday.

His Bible Class was a wonderful achievement; its growth from a little over twenty to well over two hundred, at which figure it continued for years, speaks volumes. He had an easy, fluent style, and his delightful imagery made us feel as if peoples and scenes were just before us. What a remarkable power he possessed of holding an audience! His sermons and lectures will be long remembered. They formed the topic of conversation after dismissal, and on every hand one heard, "Wasn't that grand!" "What a power!" "What an uplifting I have got!" "What a great God we have!" "What a Saviour!"

Sometimes when visiting he would find the people discussing the previous Sabbath's sermons. His visits were eagerly looked forward to, especially by those who were sick. The visits were like rays of sunshine, and left a fragrance that was delightful. He prayed in every home, and with all of his people who visited the Manse. Prayer, in which old and young were encouraged to

take part, formed a great portion of the service at every meeting. Many congregations suspend their one weekly meeting during summer, but such was not our practice. All the week-night meetings were continued summer and winter, and flourished. He took an intense delight in visiting the Women's Bible Study meeting, and enjoyed being present at the time of prayer, remarking, "It does my soul good to hear those women pray."

When he returned from his annual autumn holiday a week was always set apart for prayer, and night after night members and adherents gathered in the hall, supplicating the Lord for his blessing before beginning the work anew. Our Lord answers prayer. We know a little of what prayerfulness and close fellowship he had with God. He spoke with Him as one would with a dear friend, but the full import of this communion will only be known when we meet him in the "Home-Land," as he used to call it.

He crowded into his ministry a record of work that was amazing, and every opportunity of service for his Master was eagerly

grasped. During the War he had services every Monday at Balnagask Camp, and for nine months he acted as Honorary Chaplain to the 1st Provisional Battalion of Cameron and Seaforth Highlanders. Their parade service was held in our church each Sabbath morning at 9.30 o'clock. Officers and men highly esteemed him, and many had a great personal love for him. Their Colonel attended every service, and when leaving, said, "Only Eternity will reveal what the expounding of the Word by you has meant to my soul." He personally led many soldiers to the Lord.

Another outlet and opportunity for service occurred with the coming to our district once a year, sometimes twice, of the entertainment known as "White's Carnival." He got into touch with the travellers, and Mr White gladly gave him the best and largest tent for a meeting each Sabbath afternoon. This continued for three, four, and sometimes five weeks. It was a memorable sight to look on these people as they so eagerly listened to the Gospel story. Several came to church, while the young

people attended their own special meeting, and some, we believe, learned to trust in the Good Shepherd.

The conversion of the pianist led several to remark, "He will need to leave the shows." Mr Murray's comment was, "God will tell him what to do." When the Carnival returned, six months later, the pianist returned with it, and, at the close of a meeting, told Mr Murray he had fulfilled his engagement, and was about to return to his former occupation as a piano-tuner. He was engaged by the firm he had previously served in Edinburgh, and during Assembly time Mr Murray and he met in Princes Street, the tuner saying, "I was just wondering if my minister would be up."

Mrs Murray visited the Caravan people each week, distributing their own magazine, *The Caravan*, and helping the young people who made the Manse their "first place of call" on arriving at, or passing through, Aberdeen.

Not so long ago a woman, one of the Show people, died across in the city. Her friends came for Mr Murray, who conducted

the funeral service, comforted the bairns, and followed the hearse on foot to the grave, where, after prayer, he stood beside the father to the very end. The loving sympathy of the man was wonderful! Every soul was precious in his sight, because precious to the Redeemer.

At the Royal Infirmary, where he was a frequent visitor, he got into touch with many Naval men, and won their hearts. In an explosion of cordite on H.M.S. *Himalaya*, several men were very badly burned, one particularly so, on his face and body. Mr Murray gently approached him, saying, "I'm so very sorry." Immediately the poor man lisped brokenly, "All things work together for good to them that love God." "Ah! you know Jesus?" "A year ago; what could I have done without Him now?" This story, told so touchingly and in more detail by Mr Murray, has been an inspiration to many suffering ones.

One Saturday night a bright young Naval man was seen to approach the open-air meeting and eagerly scan the crowd. Seeing Mr Murray coming down the street, he at

once made straight for him, and reminded him of a conversation in a railway carriage, telling him that that meeting and a booklet given him had brought him to a personal decision for the Saviour, and had also been the means of blessing to his mother, away in the south of England. The man was on his way to join his ship, and had only time to tell this story, wring Mr Murray's hand, and go.

In the City Hospital Mr Murray was brought into touch with a discharged soldier whose relatives were in Canada. He enlisted sympathy for this friendless and penniless young man, so that during his last illness he was tenderly cared for by the congregation. One morning at two o'clock Mr Murray was aroused, and requested to visit the young soldier. He went, and found him troubled. One word revealed the cause of his distress, but the minister quickly reassured him on the point. The poor fellow then fell asleep, satisfied that he would be decently buried. Shortly afterwards he sang "In Immanuel's Land," and with the words on his lips, "The streams on

earth I've tasted, more deep I'll drink above," he fell asleep, to waken "Where Glory, Glory dwelleth." His funeral was well attended, and all expenses met by a few friends, who placed a small stone on his resting-place, and later sent a photograph of the scene to his mother. By many acts such as these Mr Murray spoke of the Master to whom he belonged.

During the Summer Herring Fishing, before the War, a very large number of boats came to Aberdeen, and special afternoon and evening open-air meetings were held for the fishermen. He always attended the afternoon one, and was ready to speak personally to the men. One day on the way to this meeting he met a fisherman, whom he stopped with an invitation to come with him to the meeting—a dirty, unkempt fellow he was. The man was arrested by the minister's kind word, "Come with me," and accepted the invitation. That man was on his way to commit suicide. Mr Murray saw the needy soul, and instead of losing his life the man found eternal life that afternoon. He went with the minister

and his wife to the Manse, and in the evening attended church, sitting in the pew with Mrs Murray. The sight of this man caused some to wonder, and one woman said to herself, "Fancy that man saved, and me lost!" She decided for Christ, and not long afterwards she had the joy of seeing her husband take the same step. So story after story could be told of how he seized and used his opportunities. In fact, in conducting every form of service—were it baptism, marriage, or funeral—he ever presented the claims of Christ.

Testimonies from outside often reached us, telling of blessing received. Strangers spoke, and frequently wrote, of the warm welcome accorded to them in Torry U.F. Church. We had a Look-out Committee whose duty it was to watch for strangers, welcome them, get them books, and conduct them to pews. One Naval man from Fort William said, "Since coming here I have got the assurance of salvation."

What a privilege was ours! What a splendid heritage he has left to his successor, every branch of the work being in capital

working order. Truly we have lost a great man, a real hero for the Lord.

After a heavy day's work I once remarked to Mr Murray, "You must be tired." His reply was, "There are not many more tired, but there are not many more happy."

Undoubtedly the secret of his power was his living so close to Jesus, and his deep conviction of the power of Jesus to deal with sin. "There's power in the Blood."

"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

Ministers need the driving power of love for souls nowadays, and must not rely on the various forms of entertainment we hear and see so much of.

"He that winneth souls is wise."

It might be fitting to record here the gifts presented to the congregation by hearts which were prompted to such generosity by the abiding influence of one whom they loved.



MEMORIAL COMMUNION TABLE AND CHAIRS IN TORRY UNITED FREE CHURCH

Copied from Church Record Cover.

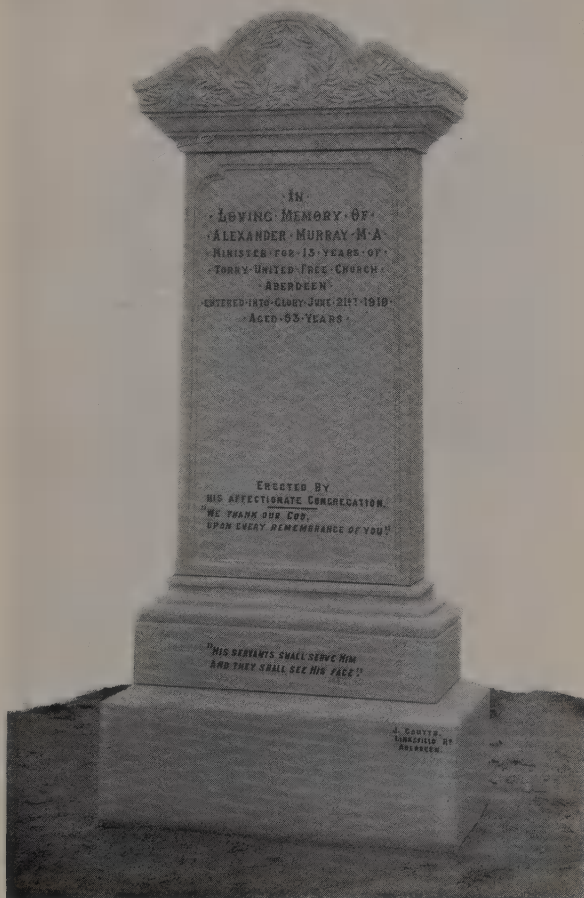
“A Communion Table of fumed oak, beautifully carved and polished, with accompanying three chairs and platform, has been presented to the church by two of our elders, viz., Messrs Robert Allan and George Leiper. A brass plate affixed on top of the table bears the inscription :

“In loving memory of Rev. Alexander Murray, M.A., who for 13 years ministered to this Congregation with much acceptance, and was greatly blessed of God in his work of the ministry. He was called to Higher Service, 21st June 1919.

“A faithful Minister of Jesus Christ.

“Octr. 1920.”

Another elder, Mr John Leiper, has gifted a very fine framed photograph of our late minister which hangs in the hall. The likeness is one of Mr Murray at his best, and as he looks at us with his clear, steady eye, we are reminded of happy bygone days, and, at the same time, inspired to “go forward in the work.”



MEMORIAL STONE AT WELLSHILL, PERTH

VIII

FROM REV. DAVID M. M'INTYRE
GLASGOW

THE most ample biography is but an artist's sketch, compared with the finished picture. A few leading facts, with illustrative incidents, may recall a loved and familiar presence which has been removed from us ; but memory must bring forth her tablets, and write, if the narration is to be truly commemorative. Life is measureless, inexhaustible ; it is derived from the Living One. In the lowliest career there is something of the majesty of God ; in the virtuous character of the humblest believer we may descry the image of the divine perfection.

Alexander Murray was an elect minister of Jesus Christ. Like Bruce of Edinburgh, he came to his grace before he came to his ministry. Like Donald Cargill, he was most in the main things. Like Welsh of Ayr, he had ever an eye to his warrant. Like Shepard of Hartford, he always went into the pulpit as if he were to give up his account to his Master. Like Richard Baxter, he was

accustomed, by prayerful meditation on the truths which he proclaimed, to drench his spirit in them. Like Burns of China, his thoughts in preaching were only of the lost and a Christ for them. Like Richard Alleine, he was infinitely and insatiably eager in the winning of souls. Like Increase Mather, he shall have for an epitaph the word "Fructuosus," for he was engraced to bear much fruit to the honour of his Lord.

Of the interior discipline which made him what we knew him to be, perhaps only she who loved him most could write with any adequacy. And only he could have told us how her bright, eager, helpful spirit supported him in all his work, and multiplied its usefulness.

Those of us who came to know Mr Murray only after he had entered on his ministry recognized that the great decisions of life had already been taken, and that there would be no turning back. With Bunyan's pilgrim he might have said, even on the day of his ordination : " I thank Him that loved me, I am fixed. My way is before me ;

my mind is beyond the river that hath no bridge." It is said that one judges most accurately the excellence of a painting when one views it in the fading light of evening, because then the great lines which determine the composition of the picture stand out clearly and the thought of the artist is revealed. In the fading light of an early sunset we discover plainly the harmonies of that well-ordered life.

Early in his course he yielded himself without reserve to the Lord. The praise of men was not in his thought; he gave his reputation to Christ, and it was well cared for; he lived for that day when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Entirely unselfish, he had purged his life of vain desire; he lived only for others. He went all the way with Christ, holding nothing back, and counting nothing too dear to offer to Him who gave His all. And now he has entered into his reward, for "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Perhaps he

spent himself too soon ; harvests were whitening and labourers were few ; perhaps he was too prodigal with his gifts, too lavish with his powers. Who shall say ? Men like Epaphroditus and women like Persis are needed in the Church of God. Paul was broken with much labour, and Christ grew old beyond His years. It is through much tribulation that the Kingdom of Heaven is advanced. How deeply he was loved by the people of his pastoral care I do not need to say, for others have told. In life they were—as they shall be hereafter—his joy and crown. And yet, we cannot but remember that this love was earned by a profuse expenditure ; it was bought with all that was most precious. It may be that our brother wore himself out prematurely by excess of toil, yet, on the other hand, there is to-day, scattered over Scotland, a multitude of men and women who, under God, owe to him their souls.

But the worker was more than his work. He had that serenity that comes from untroubled faith, a sweetness of disposition that belonged to nature, but was made more

wise and tender through companionship with Christ. Yet he was a strong man, of a high and steadfast courage ; he would not brook compromise nor tolerate evil. He was gifted with intellectual power ; he was possessed of a cultivated and well-furnished mind. But his pastoral responsibilities were exacting, and often broke in upon his hours of study. He accepted this gladly, for this was the path of obedience, and his delights were with the sons of men. He had a happy outlook upon life ; the world was his Father's, and it was very good. He had that blessed instinct which discovers the good that lies hidden in men, the enviable power of bringing it to light. Men recovered their balance in his presence ; he encouraged them to hope. His love and cheer were as an alchemy, transmuting baser metals into gold.

The doctrines that he loved most dearly were those by which men live. Like Savonarola, he displayed a banner with this cognizance, "We preach Christ crucified." He knelt under the open heavens of Pentecost, receiving continuously "the

supply of the Spirit." He looked for that blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Thus he lived, during those years that were all too few—in the power of His great sacrifice, daily renewing his covenant engagement under the seal of the Spirit, holding himself in patient readiness for the return of his Lord.

Many will miss him, miss him sorely—his own congregation above the rest, his wife above all.

Servant of God, well done !

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